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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the speaking styles of black college students to determine whether selected stylistic features of speeches of students at a predominantly black university were different from those of black college students at a predominantly white university. Audiotapes were made of 25 students at the predominantly black university and 21 students at the predominantly white university. Samples were taken from the beginning, middle, and end of each speech and coded for word length, sentence length, segmental type-token ratio, adjective-verb quotient, T-unit length, Flesch's Reading Ease Score, and Flesch's Human Interest Score. Results of the present study and results of studies by other researchers were generally similar. However, the two groups of speeches in the present study were significantly different in three areas: word length, sentence length, and Flesch's Reading Ease Score, with students at the predominantly black school using longer sentences and more syllables per word, and producing less listenable speeches. (Author/FL)

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A Stylistic Content Analysis of Speeches of Black College Students

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A Stylistic Content Analysis of Speeches of Black College Students

An Abstract

Speeches of black college students were content analyzed for selected stylistic features. The purposes of the investigation were to collect normative data on the speaking styles of black college students in public speaking and to determine whether selected stylistic features of speeches of black college students at a predominantly black university were different from those of black college students at a predominantly white university.

Audiotapes were made of students presenting speeches in beginning speech classes at Florida A&M University and at Florida State University. From these speeches, 25 presented by black college students were randomly selected from the predominantly black university and 21 by black college students from the predominantly white university. Three samples selected from each of the 46 speeches were taken from the beginning, middle and ending of each speech. These samples were coded for the following stylistic variables: word length, sentence length, segmental type-token ratio, Adjective-Verb Quotient; T-unit length, Flesch's Reading Ease Score, and Flesch's Human Interest Score.

As a group the speeches were similar to speeches of other college students on the selected variables. The two groups of speeches were significantly different in three of the variables: word length, sentence length, and Flesch's Reading Ease Score.

Speech teachers who teach black students from both a predominantly black university and a predominantly white university should remember that much variablity exists among college speakers and that black students will be more similar than different regardless of their school setting.

A STYLISTIC CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SPEECHES OF BLACK COLLEGE STUDENTS

Scholars have focused on style in public speaking since the classical period. Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian devoted a section of their writing to style. Style is defined as the selection and arrangement of those linquistic features which are open to choice (DeVito, 1967). Devito divided style into five classifications: "sociological style, literary style, psychological style, semantic style and liguistic style" (p. 254). Linguistic style (the focus of this research) is that element of speech pertaining to grammar, sentence structure, diversity and complexity of sentences, and related such aspects (DeVito, 1967b).

Black people's language is now being studied in relation to teaching because of the "cries" of linguists and the order from the Court. United States District Judge Charles W. Joiner ruled in 1979:

> That the Ann Arbor School System must develop a plan to train teachers to recognize that certain black elementary school students speak black English and use that knowledge in teaching them to read standard English. (Ward, 1979, p. 1)

Stewart (1968), Labov (1973), and McDavid and McDavid

(1951) explained that the language of black people needs to be studied as a language in itself and that the results will aid in educational strategies for black students.

To date, very few investigators have studied the speech of black subjects over the age of ten years old. Labov (1969a, 1969b, 1973; Labov & Cohen, 1973) has been in the forefront in describing speech patterns of inner-city adolescents and adults. The present investigation attemptes to describe the speech of black adults who are in college.

Since the 1954 Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas in which the Court declared separate education inherently unequal and, therefore, unconstitutional, the enrollment of black students in white institutions of education has increased. From several hundred black Americans in a few private and state universities in the North and several who won admission through court cases in the South during the late fifties, the number rose to about 350,000 now enrolled in previously all white colleges and universities. The growth leads to the questions: Are black college students in a predominantly white university different from black college students in a predominantly black university? If so, in what ways?

Williams (1968), Styles (1969), Davis (1970), and Taylor (1970) found differences in academic and social

factors between the two groups of students. Are the two groups different in speaking styles? The present investigation is designed to find out if the two groups of college students differ in their oral language usage.

A Review of Related Studies and the Rationale for Each Variable

Studies designed to analyze style used myriads of features to analyze language in a quantitative manner. The most popular of these are syllable and word count/length, Type-Token Ratio, Adjective-Verb Quotient, T-units, Flesch's Reading Ease Scores, and Flesch's Human Interest Scores.

Syllables and Word Count/Length

Several researchers used syllable and word count to analyze various language samples. Green (1958) and Gibson, Gruner, Kibler, and Kelly (1966) compared oral and written language samples of college students. Both studies revealed significant differences between the two forms of language. Preston and Gardner (1967) added personality and ability factors to the study of oral and written language samples of college students. Their results suggest that high oral productivity is associated with language fluency, and oral productivity is related to ability.

Both DeVito (1965, 1966, 1967a, 1967b) and Blankenship (1974) examined samples of spoken and written language.

One of DeVito's (1965) findings was that the samples of writing from ten faculty members contained more content words that the samples of oral communication. Blankenship (1974) found no significant differences in word lengths of various modes of speaking and writing of one male and five female college students.

The research summarized here suggests that word length (wl), which consists of both syllable count (sc) and word count (wc), is a linguistic feature related to language productivity and complexity, and that word length will serve to describe stylistic features of speeches of black college students.

Sentence Count/Length

Hunt (1966, 1973) concluded that longer sentences have often been considered a sign of linguistic complexity and maturity. His research with written compositions of students provided these average lengths of sentences: fourth graders average 13.4 words; eighth graders, 15.9 words; and twelfth graders, 16.9 words per sentence. All norms were significantly different from each other. The analysis by Gibson et al. (1966) of 500-word oral and written samples of college students found that spoken language contains shorter average sentence lengths (16.28 words per sentence) than written language (18.18 words per sentence). Preston and Gardner (1967) found that longer sentences indicates greater sentence complexity. DeVito

(1965) noted that sentence length does not differentiate oral and written style. Blankenship (1962) concluded that written texts and oral speech of experienced speakers vary in sentence length, but later she (1974) found significant differences among college speakers and writers in sentence length.

The present investigators conclude from the review of literature that sentence length is a critical measure of linguistic style.

Type-Token Ratio

The Type-Token Ratio (TTR) is a ratio of different words (types) to total words (tokens) in a given language sample (Johnson, 1946). It is used as a measure of vocabulary flexibility or variability in a language sample. Chotlos (1944) studied the relationship between the TTR of written language samples and the factors of IQ, age, locality, and sex. Among his results were 1) a 100-word segment provides similar results to the TTR of 500-, 1000-, and 3000- word segments; 2) TTR seems significantly related to IQ; and 3) the older the children, the higher are the scores on the TTR. Mann (1944) found that TTR's of written language sample of college freshmen (.71) and schizophrenic patients (.67) are significantly different from each other. DeVito (1965) observed higher TTRs for written than spoken language of faculty members. Gibson

et al (1966) revealed that TTR's of written messages (.7135) of college students are higher than those of spoken language (.6908). Preston and Gardner (1967) found that higher TTR's indicate diversification in word usage.

Payne (1973) content analyzed language samples of black persons. Payne's norm for the TTR of 30 texts of six black spokesmen is .652.

The investigators conclude from this review that the TTR is an index of vocabulary diversity and, therefore, quite suitable as a measure of linguistic style in speeches.

Adjective-verb Quotient

The adjective-verb quotient (AVQ) is a ratio between the number of adjectives per 100 verbs in a given sample (Boder, 1940). The AVQ is a measure of both sentence complexity and vocabulary level. From Boder's point of view, "The attributive adjective, especially when located before the noun, corresponds to a higher type of ideation and linguistic behavior than is usually required by other speech forms" (pp. 314-315). Boder examined 388 specimens of writings taken from four different sources: modern plays representing conversational style; state and federal statues representing legal style; recent fiction representing narrative style; and scientific monographs representing descriptive style. Boder's rules were used to isolate the adjectives and verbs (Boder, 1940, p. 316).

The results of Boder's data analysis follow: plays average AVQ 11.2; legal statues average AVQ 20.0; fiction average AVQ 35.2; and science average AVQ 75.4.

Mann (1944) found that the AVQs of the patients (.43) and the freshmen (.51) are almost significantly different from each other. Blankenship (1974) found a significant difference between written and oral discourses in a adjective-verb quotients of six college students.

From this review of research on the adjective-verb quotient, the present investigators conclude that the AVQ describes a linguistic feature of written and spoken discourse.

T-units

T-units or the "minimal terminal units", as Hunt (1965, 1966, 1973b) called them, are "the shortest unit into which a piece of discourse can be cut without leaving any sentence fragments as residue" (1973b, p. 1980). A T-unit always contains just one independent clause plus as many subordinate clauses as are attached to the independent clause. T-units may be counted by the number of T-units per sentence or by the length of T-units (in words) per sentence. Hunt's (1966) averages for T-unit lengths in written communication are as follows:

4th grade . . . . . 8.6 words per T-unit
8th grade . . . . . 11.5 words per T-unit
12th grade . . . . . 14.4 words per T-unit

Adult . . . . . 20.6 words per T-unit

O'Donnell, Griffin, and Norris (1967) studied T-units in written and oral language of children in kindergarten, first grade, second grade, third grade, fifth grade, and seventh grade. They found that the mean T-unit length for kindergarteners while speaking is 7.07, first graders 7.97, second graders 8.33, third graders 8.73, fifth graders 8.90, and seventh graders 9.80 words per T-unit. In writing, third graders average 7.67 words per T-unit, fifth graders 9.34, and seventh graders 9.99. Graves (1967), adding socioeconomic levels and race to the study of oral and written samples, ascertained that the T-unit length for upper-socioeconomic level eighth grade speakers is 11.95 and for lower-socioeconomic level eighth grade speakers, 10.76. Moreover, Graves noted, "White students produced more written language than Negro subjects" (p. 54). Market (1971) found no significant differences in T-unit lengths between written language of native high school students and foreign college students.

From the review of research on T-units, the present investigators conclude that T-units are indicative of syntactic ability and that T-units will describe an aspect of linguistic style in speeches of black college students.

Flesch's Reading Ease Scores

Flesch's Reading Ease Scores (R. E. S.) (Flesch, 1960) are used to gauge the ease with which a particular language

sample is comprehended. The two elements used in the Reading Ease Formula to compute the scores are the average sentence length (sl) in words, and the average word length (wl) in syllables per 100 words: "R. E. = 206.853-846 wl - 1.015 sl" (Flesch, 1948, p. 223).

Harwood (1955) and Cartier (1955) found a positive relationship between reading and listenability of a passage computed with Flesch's Reading Ease Formula. Gibson et al (1966) observed that Flesch's Reading Ease Scores differentiate oral (R. E. S. 60.90) and written (R. E. S. 50. 20) language samples of college students at two different universities. Payne (1973) established the Flesch's Reading Score norm of 40 (difficult level) for selected speeches of six black spokesmen.

From the review of studies on Flesch's Reading Ease Scores, the investigators conclude that Flesch's Scores will provide an adequate measure of listenability of the speeches of college students.

Flesch's Human Interest Scores

Flesch's Human Interest Score (H. I. S.) is designed to quantify the "personal interest" of a passage. It is based on the assumption that the more "personal words" and "personal sentences" a passage has the greater will be its interest to the reader (Flesch, 1960). Flesch (1974) applied his formula to two magazines, the New Yorker and the Reader's Digest, and found them to have significantly

different "human interest" scores. Applying Flesch's Human Interest Formula, Gibson et al. (1966) found that spoken lanaguage is higher in "personal words" and thereby places higher in "human interest" (H. I. S. =25.97) than written language (H. I. S. =14.49). However, DeVito (1965) found no significant difference in "human interest" scores between written and oral language samples of ten college teachers. Payne (1973) established the Flesch's Human Interest Score of 54.33 for six black spokesmen.

Based on the review of research on Flesch's Human Interest Scores, the investigators concluded that Flesch's Human Interest Scores will serve as a scale for determining the "human interest" in the speeches of black college students.

Black Students in Two Settings

While Williams (1968) studied two groups of black high school students and one group of white students of Brevard County, Styles (1969) examined certain aspects of two groups of black college students at two neighboring universities in Tallahassee, Florida. Williams found significant differences between the white group and the two black groups of students in achievement, academic interest, educational and civic beliefs, and racial views. More important to this study were the significant differences found between the two groups of black students on the Florida Statewide Twelfth Grade Test. Except for verbal ability, the

nonsegregated school group scored significantly higher scores in the measured variables than the segregated school group. Styles (1969) studied matched groups of regular and academically "high risk" black students at Florida State University (FSU) and Florida A & M University (FAMU). Using self-concept, personality characteristics, vocational aspiration, and grade point averages as pretest and posttest variables; Styles found that students at the predominantly black university (FAMU) possess higher grade point averages for one quarter, greater freedom from withdrawal tendencies, better adjustment in family relation and more acceptable social skills than those at the predominantly white university (FSU).

Richardson (1970) observed more similarities than differences between two groups of black college students at Langston University, a predominantly black university. The two groups consisted of freshmen from a segregated high school and those from a nonsegregated high school. Richardson observed significant differences between the two groups in the scores on the ACT English test, grade-point averages, and the size of the high schools from which they came. Taylor (1970) administered self-concept scales to undergraduate black students at the predominantly white University of Alabama and at the predominantly black Stillman College. He found significant differences in the self-concept of the two groups, with higher self-concept for

the black students at the University of Alabama.

These studies indicate some differences between black students in two settings on academic and personality factors. The present study sought to determine if two groups of black college students, one being in a predominantly black university and the other being in a predominantly white university, differ in the linguistic measures studied.

Hypotheses in the Study

The study examined speeches of black college students for selected linguistic stylistic features in terms of word length, sentence length, segmental Type-Token Ratio, Adjective-Verb Quotient, T-units, Flesch's Reading Ease Scores, and Flesch's Human Interest Scores. In addition, the following null hypotheses were tested for the seven variables:

Hypothesis 1. There is no significant difference between the speeches of the two groups of black college students on word lengths.

Hypothesis 2. There is no significant difference between the speeches of the two groups of black college students on sentence lengths.

Hypothesis 3. There is no significant difference between the speeches of the two groups of black college students on segmental Type-Token Ratios.

Hypothesis 4. There is no significant difference between the speeches of the two groups of black college

students on the Adjective-Verb Quotients.

Hypothesis 5. There is no significant difference between the speeches of the two groups of black college students on T-unit lengths.

Hypothesis 6. There is no significant difference between the speeches of the two groups of black college students on Flesch's Reading Ease Scores.

Hypothesis 7. There is no significant difference between the speeches of the two groups of black college students on Flesch's Human Interest Scores.

Methodology

Speeches of black students from a predominantly black university and from a predominantly white university were content analyzed for selected linguistic features.

Subjects

The content analysis was completed on speeches by 25 black students in beginning speech classes at Florida A & M University (FAMU), a predominantly black university, and speeches given by 21 black students in beginning speech classes at Florida State University (FSU), a predominantly white university.

The subjects in the study were mainly native Floridians. Two of the 25 students at FAMU were between 26 and 30 years old, but none of the 21 students at FSU was over 25 years old. The FAMU group included three non-Floridians, while

seven in the FSU group were non-Floridians.

Since classes had both black and white students, the researchers taped all speeches, but analyzed only the speeches of black students. This procedure added to the chances of securing speech samples closer to those normally presented in speech classes by not alerting the student to race being a variable in the study.

Procedure for Securing the Speeches

Each class was instructed through written and oral directions to present 4/to/5-minute speeches. They were told that they might use key-word out-lines if needed. A personal data form was completed by members of each class, on which the student provided the following information: name, the date, birthdate, birthplace, hometown, race, sex, nationality, college attending, classification, name of speech course, previous speech course(s), and past speaking experiences.

Transcribing the Audiotapes

One of the investigators transcribed all of the speeches of the black students subjects according to specific rules agreed on by both investigators. She:

1. Wrote the words and syllables as said and used a dictionary when whe was uncertain.

2. Transcribed in detail nonfluencies of sounds, syllables, and words not considered English words.

3. Spelled numbers and letter of the alphabets as said.

4. Indicated words not understood and, when possible, noted the number of syllables heard; otherwise, these unintelligible words were counted as one syllable words.

5. Indicated with the letters "nonfl" nonfluencies not obvious when reading the transcript.

6. Marked sentences and units of thought with appropriate punctuation marks such as commas, colons, semicolons, periods, question marks, and exclamation marks. Certain vocal intonations such as the rising and falling of the pitch and an estimate pause length helped the investigator determine where sentences began and ended. When the investigator was in doubt about where sentences began, she used units of thought and divided accordingly. When and, but, and so began sentences they were counted as interjections. The rationale for using these conjunctions as the beginning of sentences came from both Lee (1974) and Flesch (1974). The first approximately 100 words were marked off, the last 100 words, and the middle 100 words so that each group of approximately 100 words terminated at the end of a sentence.

Coding for the Variables

The procedures involving the many linguistic units identified and coded were as follows:

Words. Using transcripts, the investigator identified words according to instructions by Flesch (1948, 1974). Further, she counted as words interjections such as er, huh, uh, and oh (Gibson et al., 1966), and part-word repetition such as for forward.

The word length was computed by dividing the mean number of syllables per sample by the mean number of words per sample.

Sentences. A sentence was considered a complete thought. Generally, Flesch's (1948) directions for counting sentences were used.

The number of sentences for each of the three samples was summed to compute a mean for the three samples per speech. Also, the mean number of words per sentence was computed by dividing the mean number of words per sample by the mean number of sentences per sample. This figure was the sentence length for the speech.

Type-Token Ratio. The Type-Token Ratio (TTR) was computed by dividing the mean number of different words per sample by the mean number of words per sample:

$$\text{Segmental Type-Token Ratio} = \frac{\text{Mean Number of Different Words per Sample}}{\text{Mean Number of Words per Sample}}$$

The investigator counted as a different word all words, when spelled by the investigator looked like a different word regardless of the use of the word in a sentence.

Adjective-Verb Quotient. The Adjective-Verb Quotient was determined by dividing the mean number of adjectives per sample by the mean number of verbs in the approximately 100-word samples. Boder's directions (1940, p. 316) were used for identifying the units.

Boder did not address the matter of nonfluencies. In this investigation, if an adjective was repeated, only the one(s) closest to the noun described was counted. For example, if the speaker said "red red red red hat" only the last "red" was counted as the adjective.

The mean number of adjectives was divided by the mean number of verbs to compute the Adjective-Verb Quotient.

T-units. T-units were counted according to instructions given by Hunt (1966, 1973b). T-units were counted and the mean T-unit length was computed by dividing the mean number of words in the approximately 100-word samples by the mean number of T-units per sample.

Flesch's Reading Ease Scores. Flesch's Reading Ease Scores were used as a measure of listenability. In order to calculate Flesch's Scores (1948), the investigator used two previously discussed measures: the mean number of words per sentence and the mean number of syllables per 100-word sample. The formula for computing Flesch's Reading Ease Score was: R. E. = 206.835 - .846 wl - 1.015 sl.

Flesch's Human Interest Scores. Flesch's Human Interest Scores (1948) were used as a measure of "human interest" in the speeches. The two measures needed to compute the Human Interest Scores were the percent of "personal words" and the percent of "personal sentences." Flesch's (1948) instructions were followed.

Establishing Reliability

One of the investigators and four black students who were English majors or who made few grammatical errors in their own oral speech coded three speeches from each of the two groups of speeches. The coefficients of reliability for the investigator and the four student assistants ranged from a low .80 on the Adjective-Verb Quotient to a high of .97 on sentence lengths, segmental Type-Token Ratios, and T-unit lengths. The mean coefficient of reliability for the coders on the seven variables was .92.

Analysis of Results and Discussion

Analysis of Results. Table 1 reveals the means of the two groups, the standard deviations, and the t-values for the two groups of black college students on the seven variables. The speeches at the predominately black university scored higher on word length, sentence length, Type-Token Ratio, Adjective Verb Quotient, and T-unit length, but the group at the predominately white university scored higher on Flesch's Reading Ease Scores and Flesch's Human

Interest Scores. The differences between the two groups of students were significant at the .05 level of confidence for three variables: word length, sentence length, and Flesch's Reading Ease Scores. An explanation for these differences will be given shortly.

Word and Sentence Lengths

According to Flesch's norm on plain talk (1974, p. 177), the mean of the two groups of black college students on word length (1.46 syllables per word) placed them at the level of the standard style and at an eighth and ninth grade reading level. Thus, these speeches were comparable to digest magazines (Flesch, 1974). Tremendous variablity in scores existed among the students.

Preston and Gardner (1967) found that word length was related to personality and ability variables. If this were the case, then the ability of the black students was average. A further comparison of the black students' performance on word length with those studied by Gibson et al (1966) at Butler University and the University of Nebraska showed that the black college students scored slightly lower than the students at those two universities. The investigators concluded that the mean word length placed the speeches of the black college students on the level of other college students previously discussed.

The investigators generalized that black college students use words and sentences of a similar length to

Table 1

The Group Means, Standard Deviations, and the T-values for the Two Groups of College Students on the Seven Variables.

Variables	Predominant Race of the University	Group Mean	Standard Deviation	T-values
Word Lengths	Black	1.49	.13	2.27*
	White	1.41	.11	
Sentence Length	Black	19.28	4.15	2.47*
	White	16.66	2.74	
Type-Token Ratios	Black	.75	.06	.97
	White	.73	.08	
Adjective-Verb Quotients	Black	.36	.24	1.11
	White	.28	.23	
T-unit Lengths	Black	14.99	3.35	.32
	White	14.70	2.51	
Flesch's Reading Ease Scores	Black	56.04	14.53	2.66*
	White	66.21	10.70	
Flesch's Human Interest Score	Black	39.76	15.6	.85
	White	43.88	17.11	

*Significant at the .05 level of confidence.

other college students (Gibson et al, 1966), and that these lengths were on the standard level of reading ease. Therefore, on this variable public speaking teachers should expect their black students to perform at a level equal to other college students in beginning speech classes.

The significant difference between the two groups of college students on word length and sentence length was due to the higher scores made by students at the predominantly black university. Perhaps the students who spoke in an environment in which teacher and students were of the same race felt freer to express themselves and thereby spoke longer words and sentences. Another causal factor to consider is that more extreme scores were found among the predominantly black university groups.

An implication for teaching strategy is that black college student speakers as a group have adequate control of the English language for public speaking, but that the intragroup variation especially that of students with short average sentence lengths and word lengths may need special attention by the public speaking teacher.

Type-Token Ratio and Adjective-Verb Quotient

Both groups of black students displayed diversity in word usage as indicated by the mean Type-Token Ratio of .74 and the mean Adjective-Verb Quotient of .33. Payne's (1973) norm of .65 for the TTR for the six black speakers

was comparable to the mean for the black college speakers. The mean TTR for written language samples of superior college freshmen in Mann's (1944) study and the TTR for the college speakers in Gibson et al study (1966) were also comparable with the mean TTR of the black college students.

The mean AVQ of .33 for the speeches was comparable with Boder's (1940) average for the AVQ of fictional literature (.35). The fiction level is second to the level of scientific papers which comprise the highest AVQ level. Thus, the mean AVQ of the black college students was on at least a moderate level. On the contrary, the mean AVQ of .51 for the freshmen and .43 for the patients studied by Mann (1944) were much higher than the mean AVQ of the speeches of the black college students. Mann's higher means may have been caused by two factors: her language samples of 2800 words per subject were larger than the approximately 300-word samples used in the present investigation; and the freshmen in Mann's study were selected because of their superior scores on the entering freshman tests. No such selectivity took place in the present investigation. If a shorter sample and a normal college population had been used by Mann, the AVQs may have been more comparable with those in the present study.

A frequent disparaging remark about black college students is that these students do not use diversified language. In this study, the mean TTR and the AVQ can be interpreted to

the contrary. The speech teacher of this population should expect variability in vocabulary usage.

Since no significant difference was found between the two groups of college students on both the mean TTR and the AVQ, the investigators assumed that both were similar in vocabulary flexibility.

T-unit Length

The mean T-unit length for the speeches of black college students was 14.86 words per T-unit, which compared favorably with the mean of 14.4 for twelfth grade writers studied by Hunt (1965). Both O'Donnell et al (1967) and Graves (1967) found much lower T-unit lengths for the seventh and eighth grade speakers repectively. If their research could be used as norms, then a comparison of their results with the present research suggests that black students from seventh or eighth grade continue to mature in their use of minimal units of thought. Further, the wide range of T-unit lengths among the black college students indicated a great difference in complexity of sentence structure.

Teachers of public speaking should consider the black college students as representing diverse speaking abilities and their teaching strategy must be appropriate to this diversified group. They should be assured that most students have a fundamental knowledge of the subject-predicate relationship in the English language.

Flesch's Reading Ease Scores

The mean for Flesch's Reading Ease Scores for the black college speakers was 60.68, with large variability among the students. This mean placed the speeches on the tenth or eleventh grade level and in the fairly difficult language style according to Flesch (1974).

There was a significant difference between the mean Reading Ease Scores of the two groups of black college students. This result was expected since there was a significant difference between the two groups on word length and sentence length, the two measures upon which Flesch's Reading Ease Scores are based. Further, since the predominantly black university students spoke in longer sentences and used more syllables per word, their Reading Ease Scores were expected to be lower than those of the speakers at the predominantly white university. Thus, less listenable speeches were made by the black students at the predominantly black university. Again, racial similarity of the speaker to the teacher and other listeners might have accounted for the higher language complexity of the group at the predominantly black university.

Flesch's Human Interest Scores

The mean score of the two group of college students on Flesch's Human Interest Scale placed the speeches in the highly interesting style which is equivalent to the interest

level of the New Yorker magazine (Flesch, 1974). Payne (1973) also found that the black spokesmen communicated at highly interesting level. Gibson et al. (1966) observed that the college students they studied spoke in an interesting style.

Two inferences from the stated research on Flesch's Human Interest Scores should be of importance to speech teachers of black college students. The first is that they should expect the language of most of the speeches to be high in human interest. The second is that they can be assured that as a group the students have an understanding of nouns and pronouns as used for measuring "human interest."

The two groups of college students were not significantly different from each other in mean Human Interest Scores; therefore, they seemed to be more similar than different in human interest.

Conclusion

Davis (1970), Style (1969), Taylor (1970), and William (1967) noted among other things that black students in a predominantly black school differ from black students in a predominantly white school on grade point average, ACT test scores, or standard English scores. Still Davis remarked that the two groups are more alike than different. The present investigation found similar results. Of the seven

variables dealt with this study, the two groups showed significant differences in three. These variables were word length, sentence length, and Flesch's Reading Ease Scores.

The idea that the speech teacher may have both black students from a predominantly white university and from a predominantly black university is not unrealistic. Several predominantly black and white universities have cooperative programs. Examples include Florida A&M University and Florida State University, Southern University and Louisiana State University, Grambling State University and Louisiana Tech., and Texas Southern University and the University of Houston. Speech teachers in these settings should remember that much variability exists among black college speakers and that the black students will be more similar than different regardless of their school setting.

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